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What has become of the Imperial Commission? Why have they dropped the Imperial Commission—fallen back upon a lower Jury, whose verdict had to be amended or approved by the Imperial Commission? How things do fluctuate! The Imperial Commission stock was up yesterday, and is down to-day; and the International Jury stock has to do advertising duty for some time to come, with but very little chance of convincing the people.

Why did not the unanimous half of the International Jury *date* their confirmation? We cannot think much of confirmation No. 4.

Terrible work, gentlemen, to bolster up an assertion based upon no tangible fact. It has cost a great deal of money, for Paris is an expensive place, and it will cost a great deal more yet, and will make a large hole in a year's profit. And, after all, to come out third best!

(From L'Art Musical, July 25th.)

#### THE FACTS ABOUT THE AMERICAN PIANO IN PARIS. CHICKERING TRIUMPHANT.

The three medals destined for Pianos were quickly enough placed. One of these was finally unanimously given to Mr. Broadwood, not only as a reward due to his instruments, but it was above all accorded as homage rendered to the great British manufacturers to whom the Piano owes such a multitude of improvements.—the one more precious than another.

The American Pianos had by their exceptional sonority, charmed, astonished, seduced all the members of the Jury, who mentally adjudged, from the first hearing, a Gold Medal to the United States. But after the work of examination by the Jury, it was necessary to indicate to which of the two competitors the medal should be awarded. Then the difficulties accumulated. After two meetings consecrated to listening to the adorers of Sirven and the enthusiasts of Brahma, after innumerable comings and goings, it was put to the vote, but only to find themselves equally divided.

To emerge from this position, they declared an equality between the two makers. But then another difficulty presented itself—one Gold Medal could not be divided, and the regulations did not permit of any division. The jury then decided to give a Gold Medal to each of the competitors. Thus it is wrong to try and regard as a priority one name inscribed before the other. As it is impossible to write two names at one time, and also in the case "*ex æquo*" one cannot absolutely be called the first, it is nonsense to try and establish a superiority of rank between the rewards in a case of equality.

Thus the Jury having awarded the three (3) Gold Medals reserved for the industry of the Piano, found itself as regards the other

nations, shorn of rewards of the same value for distribution. The Imperial Commission were asked for further Gold Medals. The Commission partly promised two more; the first was unanimously awarded to Mr. Strecher, the great manufacturer of Vienna. As regards the second, a name was put forward that immediately provoked reclamations from the greater part of the French manufacturers; but it was useless to judge the value of the instruments or discuss the merit of the candidate, as the Imperial Commission refused the second medal asked for.

After the judgment of the *Class Jury* was accomplished, after the formal decision of the *Group Jury*, the *Superior Council* felt that there was yet something to be done; this immense work of collectiveness seemed to them too vague; it appeared to them like a picture which wanted some master touches to bring out that what was too much in the shade, and to acknowledge parts not clearly enough designed: they went to work. When they arrived at their revision at 10th class, they quickly presented for the cross the name of Mr. Schaeffer, representative partner of the firm of Erard, to prove that the *Superior Committee* had not forgotten French manufacture. Not having Gold Medals to distribute, and not being able to decorate all the manufacturers of this nation, the *Superior Council* prayed the Emperor to attach a new cross to the house of Erard—the true banner of the industry of the piano.

Arrived at the American division, the *Superior Council* could not admit without reserve the judgment of equality rendered by the *Class Jury* in awarding a Gold Medal to each of the Piano competitors; they searched for a means to remedy this. They made enquiries from the masters in the art of manufacture, they consulted the greatest performing artists and acknowledged with them that if there was equality in the sonority there was nevertheless in favor of the *Boston Manufacturer* a difference clearly enough perceptible in the quality of sound, homogeneity and facility of the action. The *Superior Council*, taking equally into consideration the former works of the house of Chickering, which is known as the founders of Piano manufacture on a grand scale in the United States (for before then there were only known a few small makers scattered here and there), recognized that the Gold Medal was not a sufficient reward, and that it was only justice to award Mr. Chickering a special distinction that would place him above his competitor.

The Emperor, to whom these remarks were addressed, by a decree "*de proprio motu*," awarded the cross to Mr. Chickering! Honor so much the greater, being that this cross was the only one that was granted at the Exposition to any of the foreign nations for Instrumental Manufacture.

MARQUIS DE PONTECOULANT.

#### TERRACE GARDEN CONCERTS.

Mr. Thomas has made a hit with his selections from Verdi's last opera, "Don Carlos." If these selections are a fair sample of the whole, it is hard to understand how the opera failed to strike the Parisians at once, and yet made so great a success in London. This selection may be classed among the special favorites of the musical habits of Terrace Garden.

The Tenth Sunday Concert takes place to-morrow evening, when if the weather is propitious we expect to meet an overflowing audience.

#### THE EUROPEAN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC.

This Institution under the able direction of Mr. Charles Fradel will open at No. 4 Bond street, on Monday, September 2d. Applications for admission, circulars, etc., can be made, on and after Monday, September 2nd.

#### DAVID ROBERTS, HOUSE PAINTER AND ROYAL ACADEMICIAN.

AN ARTIST'S CAREER.

It is both useful and pleasant to inquire why this genius ripened into success and recognition, and that withered away in an unheeded corner. The world, never tired of trying to unravel the "trick" of success, discovers at last that it is no trick; but that success requires natural capability fostered by circumstances, a strong will, industry, prudence, and temper.

The late eminent artist, Mr. David Roberts, a shrewd, worthy, honest man, the son of a poor shoemaker at Stockbridge, a suburb of Edinburgh, was born in 1796—two years after Lord Howe's great victory over the French. He was first sent to a dame's school at threepence per week, just to keep him out of the way of the carts, and to prevent his being drowned in the Water of Leith; then to a rough master, who half flayed his legs and hands with a hard cane, and gave him a dislike to learning for the rest of his life. His first taste for art was shown by rude figures of lions and snakes, copied from caravan cartoons, that he drew with red chalk on the white kitchen wall, to show his mother what "gruesome things" were then exhibiting on the Mound. A gentleman coming one day about his shoes, asked the boy's mother who it was that used the red chalk so boldly.

"Hoot," said the proud mother, "it's just our laddie David. He's been up the Mound seeing a wild beast show, and he's caulked them there to let me see them."

By this gentleman's advice, Davy was apprenticed to Mr. Gavin Bengo, an ornamental house-painter, and employed to grind colors twelve hours a day in a noisome out-house, for the sum of two shillings a week, with a subsequent rise of sixpence a year. Kicked and cuffed by a passionate and uncertain master, Davy's seven years' servitude passed in hard work all day and delicious hours of painting, by the light of his father's lamp, at night. He did not waste his time

in repining—this is the romance of his early hardships—but he plucked up his courage, and painted at every spare moment, joining some of his brother apprentices in a night class held in a cellar under the Exchange Court, and eventually producing a picture of the battle of Trafalgar for a small exhibition. Out of his time, Roberts (we quote Mr. Ballantyne's unaffected and interesting history, recently published by Messrs. Black, of Edinburgh,) joined Bannister's traveling circus, as scene-painter, bound for a year, at twenty-five shillings a week, to paint all the scenery, and make himself useful in tragedy or comedy. When Bannister went to Portugal, and after that to the dogs, the sturdy young Scotchman turned house-painter again, sketching, however, and keeping his eyes open wherever he went, and doing whatever he had to do as well as he could.

At a new engagement, where an incompetent superior gave Roberts an opening, the lad, who had to sit up half the night to paint, prepared himself by going to bed till the curtain fell, in order to rise fresh for work.

There are times in the career of eminent men when misfortune seems unrelenting in her efforts to trip them up. On his way to Glasgow for a better engagement (five shillings a week more), the young scene-painter fell ill, and was ruthlessly drained of his last thirty shillings by a relentless doctor unwilling to give credit. At Glasgow, where he painted the scenery for several of Sir Walter Scott's novels then dramatising, another turn of cross luck befell our sturdy wrestler with the world. The manager persuaded him to paint, on speculation, a set of scenes for the "Heart of Mid-Lothian," and then broke his engagement. Returning to Edinburgh to paint for a theatre there, Roberts made the greatest stride a man can make (except a good marriage) by contracting a steadfast and unchangeable friendship with Stanfield, the great marine painter, from whom he learnt many secrets of his art, and, incited by him, he began to paint small landscapes for exhibition, sitting up half the night to paint them, after his hard day's work at the theatre.

In 1822, want of full employment drove Mr. Roberts to seek for further fortune in London, and to accept five pounds a-week at Drury Lane theatre. His conduct there was a turning-point in his career. The only one place open to him was a subordinate one; a rash man would have refused it, but Roberts took it quietly, patiently worked on, and tried to make lesser subjects effective till he had won his name. The prices of his pictures began to increase; and he had soon such power with brushes and paint, that at Dublin he actually painted fourteen scenes for a pantomime in fourteen days.

In 1832, Roberts, selling his pictures fast, began to travel for materials—first to Spain and then to Egypt. The poor house-painter was now a great man, traveling in state with his retinue of nine men, slaves who obeyed his orders. Here, as elsewhere, Roberts worked diligently, regardless of toil and hardship, intent on developing his mind, enlarging his powers, and laying by stores for old age and rainy weather. There was none of the mad recklessness and intemperance of genius about the shoemaker's son, for on his return to old England the industrious artist sold the use of his drawings to Mr. Moon for three thousand pounds. They were to be brought out in three series, at an outlay of ten thousand pounds. Mr. Louis Haghe

lithographed the clever drawings with a masterly vigor, and by the time they had been exhibited through Great Britain, the subscription list amounted to twenty thousand pounds, Roberts' native town alone subscribing twelve hundred pounds, and the Queen and archbishops putting their names on his list.

There is no moment so delightful to a self-made man as that in which he is welcomed in his own native place. When Roberts visited Edinburgh in 1842, to see his mother and sister, and old Roslin—the sketches of which had first made him famous—the Edinburgh celebrities—the authors, lawyers, doctors, and artists—gave him a grand dinner. Kindly speeches were made, showing to what a high point Roberts had carried scene-painting, and how he had traversed France, Spain, Syria, and the Holy Land, bringing home to us all his memories of the relics of past times and of consecrated places.

Prosperity did not spoil the sturdy Scotch nature of the now great painter. He worked hard against greed, selfishness, and fogyness, trying to open the Royal Academy Exhibition at night to the working classes, who were then taxed to buy national pictures they were never able to see. There was one fine point about Roberts' character—he never broke up an old friendship. Talk of Damon and Pythias! Roberts and Stanfield were friends without a pique, tiff, or jealousy, from boys to old men. In 1854, he and Stanfield visited Edinburgh, where they had both worked steadily and bravely at scene-painting. Roberts wept with delight to see his native village, the brook he had paddled in as a boy, the public-house sign he had once painted, and last, and most solemn spot of all, his father's grave. On this occasion another honor dear to a Scottish heart awaited Roberts: the town council of Edinburgh conferred on him the freedom of the city. The delighted artist in his speech said he had been taught in youth to respect his superiors and also himself, and he trusted that his success (of which he spoke humbly, but like a man,) would be an inducement to the 'prentice-boys of Edinburgh—in whose number he once was enrolled—to persevere and to work upwards, as he trusted he had done, with honor, integrity, and probity.

In 1861, Roberts, by the advice of that extraordinary painter Turner, began a series of views of London from the Thames, feeling that the old city was fast passing away into new transformations. I saw many of them on the painter's easel and more in the exhibition. They were broad and grandly composed, but not very full of minute truth, for scene-painting had spoiled Roberts' eye for that: all that he wanted was well contrasted masses of light and dark, and pleasantly, lucidly arranged architecture.

To the last, Roberts was kind to less fortunate people. When generous and charitable men (Mr. Charles Dickens foremost among them,) founded the Dramatic College for old, worn-out, and unsuccessful actors, Roberts and Stanfield built one of the houses at their own expense. On one occasion a poor artist, now a well-known man, called on the great Royal Academician to show him his sketches. Roberts was stiff, gruff, and not very cordial.

"Going to set the Thames afire," he said, "I suppose, like most other young chaps from the North. Not so easy; plenty of clever fellows here—you'll find it hard to keep up with them. Old story of Whittington—you won't find London paved with gold."

The young artist was hurt, his pride ruffled; he stammered out a half angry apology for taking up Mr. Roberts' time, lifted his portfolio from the chair with a heavy heart, and made for the door.

The old artist, hardened against sanguine young ambition, softened.

"Stop, sir," he cried. "You are in a vast hurry. Are those your sketches? Let's look at them—sit down, sit down, young man."

Roberts examined the drawings carefully, glanced up now and then to ask shrewd questions as to the young aspirant's intentions, prospects, and views; showed him a picture then on his easel, and finally wrote and handed him a note to a leading firm of picture-dealers. The grateful lad left the house elated and proud. The firm instantly bought his drawings at two pounds each, and asked for another set. The young artist could hardly press back his tears of joy, or prevent leaping on the dealer's counter and shouting. He pocketed the money, however, with decorous deliberation, and left the shop with a careless stride of dignified coolness; but when at the corner of the street something in his heart like clock-work gone mad ran away with him at full gallop. He took to his heels, ran back to his lodgings at tip-top speed, and flung down the money for his long over-due bill with a bounce to the now smiling landlady. An hour ago he had left his dingy door with slouched hat, empty pocket, and a desponding, listless walk. So does hope glorify a man.

Do small incidents in youth change a man's career, or do the strong faculty and predominating temperament always fight out a way? These questions the reader of biography is never tired of thinking over. Roberts, when a child, read a book on fortune-telling; that book told him that men with moles on their legs (save the mark!) always have been great travelers. The faculty of traveling, already fermenting, made the boy first think that he should travel; but it did not (we contend) make him wish to travel. That restless desire was born in him. A love of the Bible—that love that good Scottish mothers and the brave Scottish education so often implant in the minds of Scottish children—led the painter in after years to the Holy Land. His early holiday visits to beautiful Roslin chapel gave his art a bias to architecture.

Though no exact and painfully loving recorder of scenery, Roberts was, in his prime, a prompt, grand painter; not a great colorist, but a fine, quick composer; scarcely in despair if a steeple or a mountain was a mile or two too much to the right or left. Perhaps no artist will ever arise who will blend a grand comprehension with perfect microscopic truth.

Mr. Ballantyne's simple-hearted book shows us a worthy, kind man, pursuing his career with undaunted resolution through years of hard, mean, and ill-requited work, till the great reward came, and the world crowded to do him honor, and to bring him that pleasant form of fame—gold. He was always generous to unhappy and fallen men of his own profession; he was always sympathizing to young strugglers in art. He was a good husband, brother, and father. He was a hospitable host and a steadfast friend. He spent an industrious life, reveling in the beauty of nature, and gathering it all over the world with all the intellectual Force Providence had enabled him to exert.